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Letter dated 17 July 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to refer to the letter dated 11 July 2000 addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon (S/2000/674) concerning the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Now that Israel has withdrawn from Lebanon, thereby fulfilling its obligations under Security Council resolution 425 (1978), it is incumbent upon the other parties, chiefly the Government of Lebanon, to fulfil their remaining obligations under the resolution. These include the restoration of international peace and security and the bringing about of the return of the effective authority of the Government of Lebanon in the area. These provisions of resolution 425 (1978) require, therefore, that Lebanon deploy its armed forces and disarm the militia groups operating in southern Lebanon, including the terrorist group Hizballah. They also entail putting an end to the increasing wave of violations of Israeli sovereignty that Lebanon is now hosting: from cross-border attacks targeting Israelis, among them unarmed civilians, along with repeated attempts to sabotage and penetrate the border fence, to encroachments onto territory clearly on the Israeli side of the line of withdrawal.

It should be recalled that the Secretary-General, in his report of 16 June 2000 (S/2000/590), noted commitments expressed to him by the Government of Lebanon regarding deploying Lebanon's armed forces "as soon as I have confirmed Israel's withdrawal in compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978)" (para. 38). At the conclusion of the report, the Secretary-General did confirm Israel's withdrawal as specified (para. 40). Moreover, the Security Council, in its presidential statement of 18 June 2000 (S/PRST/2000/21), endorsed the Secretary-General's confirmation, and called upon the Government of Lebanon "to proceed with the deployment of the Lebanese armed forces as soon as possible, with the assistance of UNIFIL, into the Lebanese territory recently vacated by Israel".

In addition, Lebanon should be called upon to fulfil its obligation to act with restraint and fairness towards members of the South Lebanese Army.

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I wish to recall the appeal of Prime Minister Ehud Barak to the Government of Lebanon following Israel's withdrawal, in a special session of the Knesset, held on 25 May 2000, in the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shemona, where terrorists had rained hundreds of Katyusha rockets from Lebanon over the years: "I appeal to the Government and people of Lebanon," Mr. Barak said, "I appeal to you, President Emile Lahoud, Israel extends it hand towards peace out of a vision of a joint future better for the children of both peoples. Let's exploit the moment, let's talk peace".

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 43, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ambassador Aaron **Jacob**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.